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Experienced Air Force engineer heads Space Vehicles Directorate unit

New leader of the organization's Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., Research Site excited about initial command opportunity

Monday, Oct. 24, 2005, holds special meaning for 18-year Air Force veteran Lt. Col. Bruce Anderson.

On that date, he assumed command of his first unit, a unique opportunity for a career engineer.

"This is my first time serving as a commander. As an engineer, you have very few opportunities to command," said Lt. Col. Anderson. "My biggest focus is on the people, our most important resource."

Although he now commands the Hanscom Research Site which is comprised of over 84 military personnel split between the Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles and Sensors Directorates at Hanscom AFB, Mass., Lt. Col. Anderson wears two leadership hats, as he also serves as the deputy for the Battlespace Environment Division, the largest division at the site.

Noted for its Space Weather Center of Excellence and Surveillance Innovation Center, the division detects and predicts threats to warfighting systems across the full spectrum of natural and man-made sources in the harsh space environment. The division supports active, as well as passive means to eliminate/mitigate such threats and support air and space capabilities for America's global engagement. Because of the approved 2005 Base Realignment and Closure recommendations, the Battlespace Environment Division will move in late fiscal year 2009 or early FY2010 to join its parent unit at Kirtland AFB, N.M. The relocation will involve approximately 242 military, civilian, and contractor positions. In addition, due to the BRAC, the Sensors Directorate personnel will move to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

"With my Battlespace Environment Division deputy position, I want to focus foremost on executing our programs and pursuing new opportunities to do research and development as efficiently as possible," said Anderson. "I also want to support the BRAC transition by ensuring we build portable programs that can be executed regardless."

Prior to serving with the directorate team, he worked for over two years at the Air Force's Space Control Division at the Pentagon, providing technical and acquisition expertise, as well as managing sensitive test approvals. During this timeframe, Lt. Col. Anderson also played a critical role in advancing the experimental satellite system-11 (XSS-11) project, which launched in April 2005 for a 12-18 month flight, and recently received the *Popular Science's* Best of What's New Award in the Aviation and Space category for its groundbreaking rendezvous and proximity operations with U.S.-owned, defunct spacecraft. From 1999 to 2003, he was the chief, Technology Division, Space Superiority Systems Program Office, Los Angeles AFB, Calif. Although he has been

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Space Vehicles Directorate

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assigned to generally technology-oriented jobs in the past, Lt. Col. Anderson is excited about his new leadership role.

“My commander philosophy is to focus on the people and to empower them, as well as provide guidance and vision,” said the Hanscom Research Site commander. “I see my role as a senior mentor. I want to serve as an example to the junior officers in the unit that there is an Air Force career as an engineer. There is a path for you.”

After graduating from the University of Virginia with an electrical engineering degree, Lt. Col. Anderson began his Air Force career in 1988 at Edwards AFB, Calif., as a software engineer on the B-1B test program, but soon graduated to become a flight test engineer involved with all aspects of flight test. Three years later, he attended the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, where he received a master’s degree in electrical engineering. Then, he selected to stay at AFIT to pursue a doctorate also in electrical engineering, which he completed in 1997 while working at the National Reconnaissance Office’s headquarters in Chantilly, Va.

Anderson’s Air Force service has continued a family tradition of serving in the same military branch, as both his father and grandfather wore the blue uniform. Similar to their influence on his career, he desires to assist the Airmen at the Hanscom Research Site reach their potential.

“I also want to help our personnel obtain their goals. I want to personally set the standard concerning what is expected of a military officer in a predominantly civilian environment,” said the Battlespace Environment Division deputy. “I am a team builder and like to build consensus in decision making.”

With Lt. Col. Anderson’s assumption of command, the AFRL team at Hanscom AFB has a new leader putting others first.



1st Lt. Kimberlee Gruenstein, Space Weather Nanotechnology Project scientist, Battlespace Environment Division, Space Vehicles Directorate, Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., shows Lt. Col. Bruce Anderson, commander, Hanscom Research Site, and deputy, Battlespace Environment Division, the self-assembled monolayer, an apparatus used to determine space environmental effects on materials. (Photo by Lee Stevens)